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## OBSERVATION OF PRIMITIVE RITUAL.

THE second number of "A Journal of American Ethnology and Archæology," the organ of the Hemenway Southwestern Archæological Expedition, contains a most interesting and instructive account of summer ceremonials at the Tusayan pueblos, by J. Walter Fewkes. The great merit of Dr. Fewkes has been to call attention to the importance of making a minute record of ritual. It is now evident that all American tribes, in so far as they preserve their primitive conditions, — perhaps it may be said all uncivilized races, — possess an elaborate ceremonial, with a calendar of ceremonies as precise and determined as those of mediæval Christianity. The character of these observances makes it self-evident that they belong in principle and in the main to pre-Columbian American life, however contact with Christianity may have caused variations. As regards the remains of ancient ritual still capable of record, the importance cannot be overestimated of making investigation while there is still time. The few brief years ought to be utilized. It is not only for America that the work needs to be done. In Australia, in Africa, in all regions where primitive life continues to exist, there is almost a complete absence of information respecting the detail of ritual, in which alone is to be sought the explanation of the religious life.

In regard to primitive psychology, the information already secured will modify general views heretofore entertained. No one of the hypotheses respecting the origin and development of religions and mythologies will prove capable of defence in all aspects. With respect to American tribes, every new piece of knowledge tends to confirm the opinion that their conceptions represent an earlier stage of progress than any of which we are informed by the early records of Europe and the Orient. In promoting the completion of this record lies the opportunity of folk-lore societies. It is to be hoped that the occasion will not be thrown away, and that the generosity of Americans will be adequate to assist the self-sacrifice of students who are willing, for a small remuneration, to sacrifice to anthropological science the best years of their life.

W. W. N.